

*Hanitzsch, Thomas; Newhagen, John E.; Deuze, Mark;
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URN: urn:nbn:de:gbv:ilm1-2014210314

Published OpenAccess: November 2014

Original published in:

Journalism : theory, practice & criticism. - London [u.a.] : Sage (ISSN 1741-3001). - 6 (2005) 4, S. 506-513.

DOI: 10.1177/1464884905056818

URL: <http://dx.DOI.org/10.1177/1464884905056818>

[Visited: 2014-10-14]

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Report: Fostering institutionalization and internationalization: ICA's Journalism Studies Interest Group takes stock of its inaugural year (2004–5)

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Journalism 2005 6: 506

DOI: 10.1177/1464884905056818

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Fostering institutionalization and internationalization

ICA's Journalism Studies Interest Group takes stock of its inaugural year (2004–5)

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In May 2005, the Journalism Studies Interest Group (JSIG) of the International Communication Association (ICA) completed its first year of official existence. Overall, it has been a very successful year for the group. Among many other things, the Interest Group could substantially expand its international membership and did play an active role in academic self-organization as well as in the further institutionalization of journalism studies as an academic field of studies and education. This is a good basis for looking back and taking stock of what has been done during the group's inaugural year. To provide the reader with a systematic account of the Interest Group's activities, this report is organized in five sections covering issues related to the division's organization, cooperation with other institutions, reviewing and planning for the 2005 ICA convention, scholarly awards and outlook to future activities.

Organization

The membership of the Journalism Studies Interest Group displayed a constant growth over the first year, reflecting the need for such a sub-structure in the

international academia. By the time this report was written, the Interest Group had about 170 members, which is still a small number compared to other, well-established ICA divisions. The fact that ICA now has 21 divisions and special interest groups recently triggered some consideration of a possible re-organization of the Association's divisional structure. However, this may arguably not affect the existence of journalism studies as an independent unit of the ICA, as it seems quite natural to organize academic structures (schools as well as associations) along what constitutes the main focus of research and education (journalism, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, etc.).

In terms of international distribution, the USA is the largest contributor of members to the Journalism Studies Interest Group, making up 55 percent of the entire membership. Nevertheless, the Interest Group also has a strong international membership base. It gained a firm foothold in Europe (about one-fifth of all members), where scholars from Germany form the largest national group. About one out of 10 JSIG members comes from the Asian continent, including Israel, Korea, China, Taiwan and Indonesia. Africa, Australia and Latin America, on the other hand, contributed only a few members.

To attract more members to ICA in general and the Interest Group in particular, publicity material was distributed in 2004 at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) in Toronto, the annual meeting of the National Communication Association (NCA) in Chicago and the international conference 'Journalism Research in an Era of Globalization' in Erfurt.¹ The purpose and mission of the group was promoted to a wider audience in an essay published in *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* (Hanitzsch et al., 2005) and in several other publications (e.g. Deuze, 2004a, 2004b). Additionally, flyers were sent to several schools and university departments that focus on journalism and mass communication education and research. Thanks to the hard work of E. Graham McKinley, the Journalism Studies Interest Group is also visible on the world wide web.² Also, a first newsletter was put online in November 2004, a second newsletter following in May 2005.

During its first year of existence, the organizational matters of the Journalism Studies Interest Group have been in the hands of four people. Thomas Hanitzsch (Ilmenau University of Technology) served as Chair, John E. Newhagen (University of Maryland) as Vice Chair and Mark Deuze (Indiana University) as Secretary. They were elected as the group's temporary officers in June 2004. In addition, E. Graham McKinley (Rider University) has been appointed the Interest Group's web site and newsletter editor.

In May 2005, the Interest Group held its second elections, which were organized by an ad hoc election committee involving two respected scholars and Interest Group members, Jane Singer (University of Iowa) and Howard Tumber (City University, London).³ Two calls for nominations were distributed through the JSIG's mailing list, which was also used as the channel for the ballot. All of the group's initial officers were re-elected. Term of service for the present Chair and Vice Chair is one year, while for the Secretary it is two years. The status of the Chair is still temporary. Vice Chair Newhagen will assume the Chair's office in May 2006 and then serve for another two years.

Affiliation with *Journalism*, *Journalism Studies* and *Ecquid Novi*

Beginning in January 2005, the Journalism Studies Interest Group affiliated with two significant channels of its academic field, *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism* (Sage) and *Journalism Studies* (Taylor & Francis). As part of the agreement, both journals will be offered to individual members of the Interest Group at a 35 percent discount rate. Additionally, the group will be able to publish a yearly report in the journals. This report appears in *Journalism* in odd years and in *Journalism Studies* in even years. Also, both journals will alternately provide a free advertisement to the Interest Group in each issue, publicizing the existence of the group to its readers and offering information about how to join. The advertisement appears in *Journalism* in even years and in *Journalism Studies* in odd years. In terms of publication, both academic journals will continue to serve as channels for publishing outstanding research conducted by the members of the Journalism Studies Interest Group. In May 2005, the Interest Group affiliated also with *Ecquid Novi*, *South African Journal for Journalism Studies*. The journal is available for JSIG members at a special discount rate.

2005 Convention

The 2005 ICA annual conference in New York was the first convention where the Journalism Studies Interest Group had its own program. Altogether, 104 papers and nine sessions were submitted to the Interest Group. This is the highest number a new division ever received in ICA history. Overall, the quality of paper and panel submissions was very high. Given the limited number of session slots allotted to the Journalism Studies Interest Group, conference planners had to reject 38 percent of all paper submissions and 56 percent of panel submissions. Through negotiations with the ICA administra-

tion, the number of session slots provided to the Interest Group could be increased from eight to 12. To compensate for the relatively small number of time slots available, the Interest Group jointly sponsored a number of sessions with the ICA divisions of Communication and Technology, Feminist Scholarship, Mass Communication, Popular Communication and Visual Studies as well as a special panel of the German Communication Association. In the end, the Interest Group was present in 19 sessions during the 2005 convention.

The New York conference was also the first one where the Journalism Studies Interest Group held a reception. The social event was intended to bring together journalism researchers and educators as well as students interested in the study of journalism and to attract new members to the Interest Group. The well attended reception would have been impossible without the generous support of Sage and Taylor & Francis, in their capacities as publishers of *Journalism* and *Journalism Studies*, as well as several top journalism schools in the USA and overseas. We therefore gratefully acknowledge the support of the following schools: Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University; Philip Merrill College of Journalism at University of Maryland; Indiana University School of Journalism; School of Journalism and Communication at University of Queensland; School of Journalism and Mass Communication at University of Iowa; Journalism and New Media at Leiden University; Annenberg School for Communication at University of Pennsylvania; Department of Journalism at Temple University; Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University; School of Journalism and Communication at University of Oregon; and Department of Journalism & Mass Communication at University of Tampere. On behalf of the ICA's Journalism Studies Interest Group we would like to thank all these institutions for their generous contribution to the group's reception fund.

Review

Submission deadline for the 2005 convention was November 1, 2004. All submissions were subjected to rigorous peer review involving three independent referees. To the largest possible extent the focus of the individual submissions was matched with the particular expertise of the referees, although this was not possible in every case. Paper submissions were evaluated according to five specified criteria and rated on a 10-point scale (1 = weak . . . 10 = strong). The review criteria included *contribution* (originality, utility, scope, significance), *theory* (literature review, conceptualization, theorizing), *methodology* (not evaluated in non-empirical papers), *argument* (depth and strength of the arguments, persuasiveness of evidence) and *writing* (readability, organization).

Referees were alerted that mastering proper English, though essential for publication, should not be made a criterion that prevents potential papers from being presented at ICA conventions. Panel submissions were evaluated only against the criterion of *contribution*. In hindsight, planners of the next program should introduce a number of additional criteria for panel review such as *coherence* and, perhaps, *internationality*.

All papers that received two positive reviews were programmed. Because the number of time slots allotted to the Interest Group was relatively small, program planners decided to accept only four out of nine submitted sessions. In these cases, selection was based on the total scores from the reviews. Furthermore, 23 of the accepted papers were moved to the interactive paper (poster) session after it became obvious that the limited number of sessions would not allow all the accepted papers to be accommodated in paper sessions. The introduction of a Journalism Studies Interactive Paper Session was the only way to keep all good papers in the program.

The number of papers and panels individual referees had to evaluate was fairly high, four to five on average. A substantial number of colleagues even reviewed more than five papers and panels. The limited number of referees on the one hand and the unexpectedly high number of submissions caused one potentially serious problem in the review process, as those who submitted also took part in the review. Although the group could recruit several additional reviewers, there was no way to avoid potential conflicts of interests.

Those who reviewed for the group did a tremendous job. Therefore, we would like to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to the 76 colleagues who served as paper and panel reviewers. They were, in alphabetical order: Ali Abusaleem, Kevin Barnhurst, Geoffrey Baym, Markus Beiler, Daniel Berkowitz, Kimberly Bissell, Susan Brockus, Michael Bromley, Erik Bucy, Incilay Cangoz, Craig Carroll, Cynthia Carter, Yu-li Chang, Diana Chimba, Renita Coleman, David Cuillier, Paul D'Angelo, Mark Deuze, Frank Esser, James Ettema, David Fan, Dina Gavrilos, Eytan Gilboa, Juliet Gill, Sonja Glaab, Maria Grabe, Thomas Hanitzsch, Michael Harnischmacher, Ralf Hohlfeld, Lisa Holstein, Lucie Hribal, Sallie Hughes, Hans Kepplinger, Carolyn Kitch, Matthias Kohring, Tien-Tsung Lee, Mark Levy, Martin Löffelholz, Marcel Machill, E. Graham McKinley, Scott Maier, Vivian Martin, Kimberly Meltzer, Oren Meyers, John Newhagen, Hillel Nosssek, Tokunbo Ojo, David Park, Andrea Pitasi, Patrick Plaisance, John Pollock, Marina Prentoulis, Thorsten Quandt, Stephen Reese, Zvi Reich, Carsten Reinemann, Gertrude Robinson, Joseph Saltzman, Thomas Schwartz, Jae-Hwa Shin, Thomas Simonet, Jane Singer, Sujatha Sosale, Robert Stevenson, Federico Subervi, Katerina Tsetsura, Frederick Turner, Nancy Van Leuven, Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, Melissa Wall, Claire Wardle, David Weaver, Charles Whitney, H. Denis Wu, Mervat Youssef and Barbie Zelizer.

Awards

It was a great pleasure for the Journalism Studies Interest Group to award, for the first time in the group's short history, the papers that achieved the best results in the review process. Among the top faculty papers were 'Obliterating the Political: One-party Ideological Dominance and the Personalization of News in Singapore', by Soek-Fang Sim (Macalester College, USA), 'Trust in News Media: Development and Validation of a Multidimensional Scale', by Matthias Kohring (Friedrich Schiller University, Germany) and Jörg Matthes (University of Zurich, Switzerland) and 'Competition between Reporters', by Eileen Gilligan (Syracuse University, USA). The top three student papers included 'Routinizing the Unaccepted: Maintaining the Journalistic Paradigm through Media Discourse in Israel', by Oren Livio (University of Haifa, Israel), 'Myth and Newspaper Competition: When the Story-bearers Are the Story', by Sue John (University of Washington, USA) and 'Journalists and their Sources: Lessons from Anthropology', by Isabel Awad (Stanford University, USA). We congratulate these colleagues on their outstanding work.

Outlook

The Journalism Studies Interest Group will certainly work hard in order to move to full divisional status because this would entitle the group to more privileges in ICA. The Interest Group will need to have at least 200 active members enrolled for two consecutive years to become a division, which is a realistic goal for the next few years. Last but not least, we expect a significant membership growth after the Interest Group was well represented at the ICA annual conference in New York.

Furthermore, the Interest Group will develop its cooperation with the Journalism Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK). Both academic organizations will work toward a jointly sponsored program at the 2006 annual ICA conference in Dresden, Germany. Generally, the Journalism Studies Interest Group sees the upcoming ICA convention as a good opportunity to expand its European membership and boost further internationalization of the group.

Additionally, there is a plan for an international conference on 'Thinking Journalism Across National Boundaries: New Challenges and Emerging Perspectives', in Brazil in early November 2006, which will be jointly organized by the ICA's Journalism Studies Interest Group and the Brazilian Society of Journalism Researchers (SBPJor). We expect our active participation in this conference will encourage Latin American membership and support.

Furthermore, the Interest Group will develop its associations with other journalism sections at national levels as well as journalism schools across the globe.

Notes

- 1 The international conference was organized by the Ilmenau University of Technology, Germany, and Indiana University School of Journalism, USA, in association with the Journalism Division of the German Communication Association (DGPK).
- 2 <http://www.icahdq.org/divisions/JournalismStudies/jsigweb4/index.html>
- 3 The secretariat of the commission was handled by Andreas Schwarz (Ilmenau University of Technology). A potentially problematic issue was that one person running for the office of the chairperson was affiliated with the same university department where the election commission's secretariat was located. However, the election committee members independently counted the ballots and certified the results.

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Biographical notes

Thomas Hanitzsch is Assistant Professor in the Department of Media Studies at Ilmenau University of Technology. His primary research interests involve media and journalism theory, war and crisis journalism, as well as cross-cultural journalism research.

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John E. Newhagen is currently an Associate Professor at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland. His research has focused on the effects of emotion-laden television images on viewer attention and memory, and is now extending that work to include new technology.

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Mark Deuze is an Assistant Professor at Indiana University's Department of Telecommunications in Bloomington, Indiana. His research interests include the cultural and technological convergence of media culture in general and the creative industries in particular. Mark has been the Journalism Studies Interest Group secretary since its inception in 2004.

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E. Graham McKinley is Professor of Journalism at Rider University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, where she teaches writing, graphic design, desktop publishing, audio production and multimedia. Her book, *'Beverly Hills, 90210': Television, Gender, and Identity* was published in 1997 by the University of Pennsylvania Press.

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